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Prologue

A muscular tom with thick creamy fur stood in the middle of a deserted clearing, his head bowed as snow fell around him.
Out of the thick undergrowth, a small tabby she-cat approached him, wincing as her paws touched the cold frosted ground.
'Specklefur,' rasped the tom. 'Surely you, of all cats, have brought me good news?'
Specklefur dipped her head politely before licking her chest in worry. 'I am afraid even I cannot provide you with good news on this night,' she sighed.
The tom shut his eyes. 'How many?' he asked Specklefur.
'There were three, Featherstar,' she mewed. The tom's eyes lit up. 'But one was... well...'
Featherstar's ears drooped and his eyes grew sad. 'And?'
Specklefur sighed. 'She did not make it. Featherstar, she had greencough. No one could do anything. She was the medicine cat.'
'Her apprentice!' Featherstar growled. 'Did he just stand there?'
'You know very well that Firepelt would have done all he could. How could you expect anyone to cure a dying cat? She will watch over you in StarClan, Featherstar. I'm sure she will visit you in your dreams and wish the best.'
Featherstar looked at Specklefur, grief and sadness surging through his eyes. 'Don't you see?' he rasped. 'I broke the warrior code. StarClan will not forgive me so soon for my misdoings.'
The she-cat sighed. 'I'm sure you would like to see the kits, no?'
Specklefur turned away and led the clan leader in the direction of their camp.
As the two entered, heads turned and the feeling of cold and hunger spread like wildfire through the huddles of cats.
'FeatherClan is doomed this leafbare,' Featherstar heard an elder whisper to an apprentice. Featherstar and Specklefur padded over to a large fallen tree. The branches spread out near the top forming a large dome. The scents of kits and milk floated through the gap in the leaves, which acted as an entrance to the den. A cat with long black-brown fur greeted Featherstar as he and his deputy walked through into the nursery.

'Here are your beautiful kits. This one is as loud as a hawk!' she laughed, pointing to a tiny silver lump of fur which was making a high-pitched mewing sound. The other kit was near the she-cat's tummy, pressing it's tiny paws so milk would come through the teat the kit was sucking. 'There there little one,' said the she-cat, moving the silver kit towards her tummy so it too could feed.
'Thank you for looking after them, Leafwhisker,' Featherstar said with gratitude.
Leafwhisker smiled up at her leader. 'Two beautiful kits, my friend. Both little toms!'
'Hawkkit and Puddlekit,' Featherstar said proudly to Specklefur and Leafwhisker.
'A beautiful choice of names, Featherstar,' purred Specklefur before she turned to exit the den. 'I'll go and organise a quick hunting patrol, and leave you with your kits.'
Featherstar acknowledged her with a small dip of his head, before he turned to look back at his small kits. 'I'm expecting big things from you,' he whispered to them. Both of the kits' heads turned and Featherstar noticed the fire in their eyes. These kits were destined to be great; Featherstar could feel it.

Author's Note: ***I'm really sorry if this prologue seemed pretty lousy. It's from a while back and I've tried to edit it a little but this part is key to the story. Please don't let this turn you off the rest off the book, I promise the other chapters will be better!***

-Star <3

Allegiances

CloverClan

Leader- Needlestar- large brown and grey dappled tom with a white muzzle and underbelly

Deputy- Shadowstorm- slender grey Tom with bright green eyes and black-grey fur
Apprentice- Heatherpaw

Medicine Cat- Hollydawn- tortoiseshell she-cat with a white muzzle and tail

Warriors

Nettleleaf- large white tom with dark green eyes
Garlicflower- long-furred cream she-cat with gentle green eyes
Silverpool- pale grey she-cat with blue eyes and a bushy tail tipped with black and white
Batpelt- small black tom with bright yellow eyes
Hawktail- muscular silver tabby with icy blue eyes
Apprentice- Cinnamonpaw
Shadowstep- lithe black tom with long legs and green eyes
Pebblewing- light brown she-cat with a long striped tail and pale underbelly
Apprentice- Flowerpaw
Windrunner- muscular silver tom with dark grey markings and bright blue eyes
Rowanheart- tall brown tom with green eyes and a bushy tail
Willowshine- small silver striped she-cat with pale blue eyes
Sprucecoat- muscular dark brown tom with fierce amber eyes
Foxfoot- red and white tom with fierce green eyes
Apprentice- Lilacpaw
Ambereye- dark grey she-cat with dappled spots of white
Swiftclaw- brown she-cat with white paws and yellow eyes
Apprentice- Snowpaw
Palebird- blue eyed she-cat with pale cream fur and a long bushy

tail
Apprentice- Applepaw
Owlpelt- large tom with mottled brown fur with one eye and a scarred face
Haildapple- grey tom with small white dapples and pale yellow eyes
Silvertail- beautiful silver she-cat with blue eyes and dark stripes
Apprentice- Wolfpaw
Sweetbriar- fluffy light grey she-cat with odd eyes and striped legs
Greyheart- pale grey Tom with bright blue eyes

Apprentices

Heatherpaw- tall Bengal she-cat with sky-blue eyes
Cinnamonpaw- brown striped tom with yellow eyes and a pale brown underbelly
Lilacpaw- tortoiseshell she-cat with a long bushy tail
Flowerpaw- grey she-cat with small stipes and bright green eyes
Snowpaw- white she-cat with black spots and black paws
Applepaw- brown striped she-cat with beautiful blue eyes
Wolfpaw- dark grey tom with black stripes and green eyes

Queens

Greyfeather- mother of Redkit, Silverkit, Jaykit and Maplekit
Dewfoot- expecting kits

Elders

Acornwhisker- tortoiseshell tom with a long bushy tail
Spottedpelt- pale brown she-cat with a white muzzle and darker brown spots
Poppysong- small brown she cat with darker flecks

Author's Note: ***Sorry for the mixup! I had to delete Chapter 1 because I forgot to put the allegiances in front.. Whoops! Hope you understand >w<***

- Star

Chapter 1

[image]

Hawktail padded around the camp, his silver pelt glinting in the cold light. Shadowstorm, the deputy of CloverClan, had just asked him to lead a hunting patrol out into the forest. His whiskers twitched. It was the middle of Leafbare, prey was scarce. A hunt like this was going to be tiresome and difficult.
Hawktail's apprentice, Cinnamonpaw, padded over to him.
'Are we going on a patrol?' he asked excitedly.
'I am,' Hawktail replied. 'But you are cleaning out the elder's den.'
Cinnamonpaw's ears drooped.
'But I haven't done anything wrong!' he mewed. His paws sunk in and out of the wet grass, and Hawktail could almost feel his energy pulsing off him.
'So you think that your elders aren't important?' Hawktail hissed.
Cinnamonpaw rolled his eyes and stalked off towards the elders' den. Hawktail sighed. His apprentice needed to learn to respect him and the rest of the clan a little more.
As he approached, he scented Heatherpaw, who was standing just outside the den. 'I wouldn't go in there, if I were you,' she warned him.
Cinnamonpaw stepped back. 'Why? What's happened?'
'Acornwhisker and Spottedpelt are having an argument.'
Cinnamonpaw rolled his eyes. Great, it was probably something to do with who got the biggest piece of fresh kill this morning. 'Well, I'm sure Hawktail won't mind if I clean the den out later,' he mewed. Heatherpaw nodded.
'I'm sure he won't,' she purred. 'Want to do something fun?' she asked, her eyes lighting up.
'Sure!' said Cinnamonpaw. The two apprentices raced off into the forest.
Cinnamonpaw was in the ahead of the she-cat, his long legs propelling him into the forest.
'Hey, wait!' called Heatherpaw. She sped after him, and noticed with a hint of satisfaction that he was beginning to tire. After a few moments, he skidded to halt. Heatherpaw turned her head,

laughing and still speeding off into the forest.
'Heatherpaw!' he called. She whipped her head back around, only to realise she was heading straight towards the steep bank which went down to the stream. Heatherpaw's paws skidded across the ground, Cinnamonpaw pelted towards her. Just before she went rolling down the hill, the young apprentice managed to stop and sat quietly, peering down it. Cinnmonpaw, however, crashed into her back and the two rolled down the hill and landed with a splash. They waded around, scooping up water and splashing each other. Suddenly, a large orange cat came up behind Cinnamonpaw. Heatherpaw splashed him but realised too late that the cat had stopped behind her friend. She stared in horror as she realized that the large cat was now dripping wet. Water ran down his nose and into his mouth, which was open. His sharp teeth were bared, and anger flared in his eyes. Heatherpaw squealed and Cinnamonpaw ran towards her. The two sat in silence as the orange tom approached.
Hawktail was behind him. 'Cinnamonpaw, Heatherpaw, what do you think you're doing?' he snapped. The massive orange cat stepped forward.
'You are apprentices, not kits.' he growled.
'I'm sorry for getting you wet, Foxfoot,' mewed Heatherpaw quietly.
'I should think so. I shall see that Shadowstorm adds at least half a moon onto your training. Come with me back to camp, he told me that you two were going on a training session this evening.'
Shadowstorm was Heatherpaw's mentor. She followed Foxfoot and they walked off in the direction of the camp. Heatherpaw smiled over her shoulder at Cinnamonpaw before the two disappeared into the undergrowth.
Great, Cinnamonpaw thought. Now I've got to deal with Hawktail on my own.
'I'm disappointed,' Hawktail began. 'You have been an apprentice for more than three moons and still you are acting like a newborn kit. At this rate, you will never be a warrior.' The silver tom turned around and began walking back to camp. He flicked his tail, beckoning Cinnamonpaw to follow.
As the two entered the camp, Cinnamonpaw noticed Heatherpaw was just leaving, her mentor in front of her. He gave her a quick flick of his ear and she smiled. Hawktail led him into the camp.
'You're not going to tell Needlestar about me and Heatherpaw, are

you?' Cinnamonpaw mewed sadly.
'No,' purred Hawktail. 'But you are going to go and clean the elders' den.' Cinnamonpaw groaned.
'Now?'
'No, next Greenleaf. Yes, now! And don't make a mess of it!'
Cinnamonpaw pelted away, and a few minutes later Hawktail saw him coming back out of the den, a large bundle of moss in his jaws. Hawktail smiled with satisfaction. Sometimes his apprentice didn't mean to be a pain. Deep down he was strong, courageous and hardworking.
A few moments later, Ambereye, a beautiful grey dappled she-cat, passed Hawktail.
'Hi Ambereye!' he called.
She smiled and padded over. 'How was the hunting patrol?'
'It was okay. Cinnamonpaw is just cleaning out the elders' den. Would you like to share some fresh kill with me? I'm starving!'
Ambereye smiled. 'Of course,' she purred. The two selected a large rabbit from the fresh kill pile and found a quiet place to share it. When the prey was finished Ambereye licked her lips.
'That was nice,' she purred. 'I'd better go and fetch some prey for Needlestar.'
Hawktail nodded. 'I'll take some to Hollydawn,' he said. Hollydawn was the clan's medicine cat.
Hawktail padded over to the fresh kill pile and selected a juicy-looking starling for her. The camp turned dark and Hawktail looked up. A large grey cloud covered the sun. A few drops of rain trickled down through the leaves of nearby shrubs and Hawktail flicked a whisker as one fell onto his muzzle and trickled down. When Hawktail made it to Hollydawn's den, the rain was falling faster and he was glad to be inside.
'Hawktail!' mewed Hollydawn as he went deeper into the den.
Hollydawn turned from where she was sorting out herbs and looked hopefully at the bird Hawktail was holding. He set the bird down and went to leave. Then he remembered that he wanted to ask her something. Hollydawn stepped forward and lay down next to the bird, eating it slowly. 'This is great!' she purred, her mouth full of prey. Hawktail turned around.
'Have you been thinking about an apprentice yet?' he asked the she-cat.
Hollydawn shook her head. 'No,' she said, pausing to let Hawktail

settle down opposite her. 'Although, Greyfeather has just had her kits and Dewfoot is expecting. Hopefully one of them will take an interest in what I do. And if not, I'm sure I will be able to cope on my own for many moons to come.'
Hawktail smiled. 'You are a great medicine cat, Hollydawn. I'm sure one of the kits will take a liking to what your work.' He heard a rumble of thunder from outside the she-cat's den.
'Well, I said to Needlestar that I'd talk to him about something. Thanks for the fresh kill.' Hollydawn said softly.
The two stood up and exited the den, going opposite ways. When Hawktail entered the warriors' den, his pelt was sleek with rainwater. He found his nest, carefully stepping over the others, and lay down. It wasn't long before he was able to find sleep.

Author's Note: ***Phew, that's all sorted. I had to delete this because I forgot to post the allegiances before.. Well, I hope you enjoyed the chapter! Chapter 2 is currently being written >w<***

- Star

Chapter 2

[image]

Hawktail's ears perked as he heard a mouse scurrying through the dense undergrowth. Slowly, his tail down and eyes fixed on the mouse, he crept forward. His belly fur brushed the soft ground, his paws scarcely making a sound. A twig cracked.

The mouse whipped its head around and Hawktail leapt towards it. The small rodent was fast, but Hawktail was quicker. He trapped it underneath his silver paws and killed it with a quick nip to the neck. It wasn't long before he had dug a small hole and the mouse was securely buried, ready for him to pick up later.

Hawktail looked around, ears perked, listening for more prey. A bird flew up as another twig cracked in the distance. Hawktail growled, annoyed, and leapt into the air. His paw missed the bird by a whisker-length, and he flopped to the ground. He hissed in annoyance, and pricked his ears.

The scent of a cat drifted into Hawktail's nose. As the scent drew nearer, he recognised it as Foxfoot's. The large orange tom passed Hawktail quickly, carrying something in his mouth. The pungent scent of Deathberries hit Hawktail's nose, and he got to his feet.

'Foxfoot,' he said sternly to the tom who was a few tail-lengths in front of him. 'Are those Deathberries?' he asked quietly. Foxfoot grunted. 'No, they're leaves. Well of course they're Deathberries.'

Hawktail's eyes narrowed and his ears drew back. 'Why?' he said slowly. Foxfoot scowled and placed the branch on the ground.

'Hollydawn wants them,' he said plainly. He picked the stalk back up and continued to walk in the direction of the camp.

'Why would Hollydawn need Deathberries?' Hawktail asked him, slightly suspicious.

'Leaf-bare is approaching. If a cat is in pain, they need to get to StarClan quickly so their pain and suffering can come to an end.' His answer was reasonable. It had happened before, when a small she-cat named Pebblefoot had been dying. Hollydawn had fed her the Deathberries and she had gone to StarClan peacefully. Hawktail's shiver brought him back to reality. He had been a kit

when that had happened, and ever since he had been scared of the fatal berries.

He followed Foxfoot back to camp and began to realise that it was getting colder. The forest floor was crisp and little leaves remained on the ground from Leaf-fall. The birds were barely singing and the bushes weren't rustling with prey, the air still and unscented.

When the two entered the camp, Foxfoot padded off in the direction of Hollydawn's den. Hawktail saw Ambereye sitting on a rock, looking confused. A mouse lay at her paws but she wasn't eating it. Hawktail padded over.

'What's wrong with the mouse?' he asked her.

She shrugged. 'Found it in the forest. Some cat had left it there and probably forgotten about it.'

Mouse dung, Hawktail thought, remembering that the mouse he had caught earlier was most likely the one Ambereye had found. He wondered if he should tell her, but instead gave the mouse a quick sniff. 'Should be okay,' he told her.

She smiled. 'You sure?' Hawktail nodded.

'Here, I'll try it first,' he said, bending down to take a small bite from the mouse. 'Tastes fine,' he mewed.

Ambereye smiled. 'Great,' she said, touching noses briefly and taking a bite from the mouse.

Hawktail looked at her with wide eyes, observing the way her fur ruffled in the slight breeze and the way her tail swished contently as she ate. He sighed. Why did he feel so... *different* all of a sudden? Did he... *like* Ambereye?

He shook his head. He was a young warrior, he had responsibilities now. Hawktail knew that his clan had to come first, and, if he did have a mate, would it distract him from his job as a Warrior to protect his clanmates?

'I'm sorry,' he muttered to Ambereye. Feeling slightly stupid, Hawktail padded away in the direction of Hollydawn's den, leaving Ambereye to finish off the mouse.

He pushed through the draping vines and found Hollydawn wrapping up leaf parcels, travelling herbs tucked inside. 'Hello Hawktail,' she said as he came in. 'What brings you here again?'

Hawktail smiled. 'I just came to check that the Deathberries had got here okay,' he mewed. Hollydawn froze.

'D-deathberries?' she stammered. 'You know that I would never, ever allow Deathberries in my den or in the camp or even anywhere

near the clan! I have only had to use them once, and it will stay like that for as long as I am medicine cat of this clan!'

Her eyes were troubled, and the parcel that she had been making had unraveled and lay in a pile on the floor.

And then suddenly it hit him.

Author's note: ***So I'm so sorry that this chapter is so small! But I thought it would be a really good place to stop, with the cliffhanger and all. I'm sorry the story isn't that interesting as well yet, but I can't go into the main events straight away. Naughty Foxfoot ;) sorry this took a while too, I've got a few exams coming up at school soon too so don't expect Chapter 3 right away. Thanks for 50+ reads too!***
-Star

Chapter 3

[image]

Hawktail's paws thundered against the dusty ground of the camp as he bolted out of the medicine cat den, his nose following Foxfoot's scent. He followed it to the elder's den, where Acornwhisker and Spottedpelt stood in the corner, trembling. Fear-scent drifted off them in large clumps and Hawktail's whiskers twitched.

'Why did Foxfoot come here?' he ordered. The two elders were clearly in shock. Small paw steps sounded from behind Hawktail. He whipped his head around, resting his eyes on Wolfpaw. The apprentice had a small clump of moss in his mouth, and was staring at Hawktail with fear-widened eyes. The moss fell out of his mouth as he opened it in shock.

'Get Hollydawn!' exclaimed Hawktail. Wolfpaw nodded and pelted out of the den. Hawktail turned back around to face the elders. 'Hollydawn is coming,' he said reassuringly, leaping out of the den entrance, his nose still following Foxfoot's trail. The sharp scents led out into the forest, and were mingled with another's. Poppysong. Why had Foxfoot brought the elder into the forest? And more importantly, where were the Deathberries?

Hawktail's legs propelled him through the undergrowth, until he found Foxfoot and Poppysong in a clearing. The orange warrior stood a tail length away from her, as she choked. Foam spluttered out of her mouth and landed on the forest floor, beads of blood glistened around her jaws.

Hawktail stared at her with eyes full of shock, and then locked his stare onto Foxfoot.

'You!' he spat. 'Why would you lie to your clanmate, and then kill an elder?' The words flew out of the silver warrior's mouth like lightning bolts.

Foxfoot's fierce green eyes pierced Hawktail like a needle. 'This isn't what it looks like,' he called. 'A warrior like me would never kill a clanmate. Especially not Needlestar's mother.'

Hawktail spat onto the ground near Foxfoot's paws. 'You are no warrior,' he hissed.

Pawsteps echoed around the clearing, and Heatherpaw, Shadowstorm and Applepaw ran in.

'What's going on?' boomed Shadowstorm. Applepaw and Heatherpaw raced over to Poppysong, who was a silent heap of fur on the ground. The two apprentices pressed their muzzles into the elder's fur.

After a few moments, Heatherpaw turned back to Shadowstorm. 'She's d-dead,' she mewed to her mentor.

The deputy's eyes grew wide, and darted over to where Hawktail and Foxfoot were standing. 'What happened?' he mewed angrily. 'Who did this?'

Hawktail padded over. 'I followed the scents to this clearing. Earlier I met Foxfoot in the forest, and he had Deathberries. He said they were for Hollydawn, but when I asked her about them she said she had never asked for the berries. I ran out of camp as fast as I could, and when I reached this clearing, Poppysong was choking, Foxfoot watching her. I'm so sorry Shadowstorm, I didn't know what to do.'

Hawktail stared at Foxfoot. 'But you,' he spat. He paced forward and aimed a blow at the orange tom's head. 'You killed a clanmate, an elder, the leader's mother!'

Foxfoot lay on the ground, blood welling around his mouth. 'Let me explain...' he rasped. Hawktail ran a paw along Foxfoot's neck, claws unsheathed. Blood ran down it and stained the orange fur a dark red.

'You are not worthy of being called a warrior of CloverClan,' he spat. 'Needlestar will see to you being exiled. I hope you are happy now.'

Brambles rustled as Hollydawn sprinted into the clearing. She ran over to Foxfoot, staring at the puddle of blood in which he lay. 'What happened?' she mewed. Hawktail shook his head.

'Don't. He deserved this,' Hawktail hissed, baring his teeth and looking over at Poppysong.

Hollydawn followed Hawktail's gaze, and gasped when she laid eyes on the unmoving she-cat. Her paws skimmed the ground as she ran over, letting out a small mew of grief. Hawktail felt weighed down with guilt. He should have stopped Foxfoot in the forest; maybe then Poppysong wouldn't be dead.

The five cats hoisted Poppysong's body up and began to carry her back to camp. The sacred marks would be made on her before the

clan would make a vigil, honouring her life. Needlestar would be devastated. Would the clan have to make do with no leader for a half-moon whilst he grieved? Shadowstorm was a good deputy, he could handle it.

Foxfoot trailed behind the patrol, his mouth still bleeding and one eye shut. Hawktail blocked him out.

When the six entered the camp, gasps sounded from where cats sat eating fresh kill and sharing tongues in the dying light of the sun. The clouds were stained a crimson colour and despite the cold, it was a pleasant night. Heatherpaw and Applepaw were told to go to their den and Hollydawn rushed away to check on Acornwhisker and Spottedpelt.

Needlestar rushed over, Ambereye beside him. Hawktail greeted the she-cat with a flick of his tail. There was a gasp as Needlestar laid eyes on the unmoving, lifeless body of the cat who had raised him.

'What happened?' he gasped, the words scarcely escaping his mouth. Shadowstorm dipped his head, and began to tell a recount of the story that Hawktail had told him.

Hawktail stared at Foxfoot, his eyes burning through the murderer's orange pelt. His counter-gaze was emotionless and expressionless, and Hawktail wondered if he was feeling guilty.

Needlestar let out a hiss as Shadowstorm finished the story. He glared at Foxfoot, his eyes wide with rage. 'You will be exiled at dawn,' he spat. Foxfoot dipped his head.

Shadowstorm padded towards the warrior. 'You will be sleeping in a makeshift den, guarded at all times.' Foxfoot sighed.

'Where may I go once I have been exiled?'

'Wherever you please. But you may not settle or hunt within our borders. From tomorrow night, our warriors will have full permission to kill you if you are found within our grounds. You are a rogue now, Foxfoot. You belong to no clan.'

Ambereye brushed against Hawktail's side. 'I never thought that a good warrior like Foxfoot would ever kill an innocent clanmate. I wonder what the whole story was...'

Hawktail flicked an ear. 'There is no whole story. Foxfoot killed Poppysong, and that's that. I just wished I could have stopped it. I mean, maybe, if I had confronted him in the forest, none of this would have happened.'

Ambereye gave him a comforting lick on his neck. 'This wasn't

your fault. Perhaps you just didn't want to doubt your clanmate, none of us would ever want to do that to one another. Foxfoot will pay the price for what he has done.'

Hawktail nodded sadly. 'I'm glad I'm not the one being exiled. I don't think I could even live with myself if I killed a cat.' The silver warrior shook his head. 'Perhaps you should go and have a bite to eat,' Ambereye said softly.

'Would you like to join me?' mewed Hawktail hopefully.

Ambereye looked down at her paws. 'I said to Needlestar that I'd eat with him this morning,' she said quietly. 'I'm sorry. I don't really want to say no at the last minute, not with what he must be going through right now.'

Hawktail nodded. 'I understand.' He flicked her shoulder with his tail before she padded off towards the leader, touching his nose briefly.

'I understand,' Hawktail muttered.

Author's Note: ***So I'm not exactly proud of this chapter and it's not hard to see why. I try to make all my parts over 1000 words (excluding the allegiances) but I guess this was a little rushed because I didn't want to leave y'all on a cliffhanger for too long. Well, I guess I'll make he next chapter better and more thought out. Tell me if there's any mistakes that you find. Tell me some cats that you ship in the comments and also answer this question: do you think Foxfoot killed Poppysong for a reason? Let me know! Comments, votes and reads are much appreciated, as is constructive criticism. Well that's about it, sorry that the AN was mega long!***

-Star

Chapter 4

[image]

A moon had passed since the exile of Foxfoot. Poppysong's death had left the clan feeling empty and grief-stricken, but the death of the old she-cat had affected Needlestar the most. The death of his mother had grown nearer every leaf-bare, and he had prepared himself for the day that he would lose her. Despite the thought that he would be ready when the death occurred, the fact that Poppysong had been murdered made Needlestar feeling depressed and angry.

Hawktail was thinking about his leader when he passed the fresh kill pile, and he chose a juicy mouse and decided to take it to Needlestar.

His silver fur brushed against the draping vines as he entered the den. The leader lay on the floor, staring at his paws. His ribs were showing and his face was expressionless. Hawktail felt so sorry for the cat, but he had no idea what to do or say. He lay down the fresh kill next to Needlestar and prayed he would eat it- which was highly unlikely.

When he had emerged into the clearing he let his gaze drift around the camp. Lilacpaw was heading out of the clearing with her new mentor, Silvertail. He remembered that Foxfoot was Lilacpaw's old mentor, and, by the sound of what the apprentices had been whispering about, he wasn't exactly the nicest mentor in the forest. Apparently he had abused Lilacpaw; unsheathing his claws during fighting and aiming blows at her when she missed a piece of prey or made a mistake. Hawktail shook his head. Besides, he didn't know if that was completely true. Foxfoot had been a good warrior, and Hawktail still believed that there was an explanation for what had happened with Poppysong.

Shadowstorm was organizing patrols and discussing things with the senior warriors. He looked tired and his fur was sticking out at all angles. Hawktail assumed he must be filling in for Needlestar- or at least trying to. The whole clan was a little exhausted and now clan life was beginning to feel rather chaotic, without a leader taking care of things.

Greyfeather and her kits were sitting outside the nursery. The dark grey she-cat was sunning herself while her kits played- all except Maplekit. The young tom was sitting nearby, chatting to Hollydawn.
'What if a cat has Greencough?' Hawktail heard him ask.
Hollydawn cleared her throat. 'I give them catmint, and them try to prevent them from getting a fever. If they do, I make sure they get lots of water, fresh air, and daily doses of Feverfew.'
The young kit gasped. 'That's a lot to remember!' he mewed excitedly.
Hollydawn smiled and gave the tom a lick. 'It comes naturally, after a while.'
Maplekit thanked her and ran off to play with his littermates. Ambereye lay under a small tree, picking gingerly at a mouse. She too had been affected by Needlestar's sadness- to Hawktail's disappointment the leader and the pretty young she-cat were close to inseparable.
Hawktail didn't go over but instead sighed and padded out of camp. He made his way through the forest. Drops of water fell on his head, most likely from the rainfall during the night. The scents of prey drifted into his nose but he wasn't in the mood for hunting. Besides, Shadowstorm hadn't sent him on a patrol for at least three days now. Surely that meant he was having some time off? He decided to wander far into the forest, and came right up to the border. Beyond the scent markers was FeatherClan territory. Many moons ago, FeatherClan had been like CloverClan, with regular border patrols and there had even been gatherings. But one day, something snapped. FeatherClan was believed to have had a war within itself, half of the clan rebelling against Featherstar. The fearsome cat and his followers won the battle and all the cats who lost were punished. Featherstar eventually became a better cat, and started treating his clan better. He put laws in place, fair and straight forward laws. But by then the clan had become isolated and chaotic and so kept confined to its camp. Hawktail knew that crossing the border could mean death, but there was no border patrols so surely he wouldn't get caught?
A twig cracked in the distance. Hawktail turned in the direction of where the sound had come from. Beyond the scent markers. He shivered at the thought of crossing them. They were there for a reason, and they had been ever since his clan had been founded. A

mist was beginning to form. The air was thick with water vapour, and if it weren't for the cold the forest would be almost humid. The sound of rustling leaves told Hawktail that the cracking twig had just been prey- but too many leaves were being moved at once for it to be a mouse or rabbit. Birds were larger, but they rarely walked on the forest ground, and, when they did, they were careful not to make a sound.
The noises had to be from a cat or a dog. But if it were a dog, Hawktail would have smelt the stench of the creature more than five minutes ago. It had to be a cat.
The shadow of a large, muscular cat emerged from the mist, which was growing thicker by the second. Hawktail wanted to run- but that would be cowardly. He was a warrior, with a clan to protect and an apprentice to act as a role model for. He needed to drive the stranger away.
The cat stepped closer, and after a few moments, it came fully into view. It was an immense brown tom with mottled fur. A long pink scar ran down his nose, and somehow the scar looked awfully familiar, like he had seen it on multiple cats a long time ago. The tom was standing tall and he stood with a sense of power.
Hawktail hissed and fluffed up his tail. He tensed his muscles, and his fur bristled making him look twice his actual size. But then the stranger did exactly the same, and then he was twice the huge size he already was. The two toms circled each other, teeth bared, claws unsheathed. Occasionally Hawktail aimed a blow and purposely missed, trying to show that he wasn't afraid to attack the cat which was so much stronger than him.
Eventually the tom came to a stop. His fur lay down and he sat still, looking content but with his claws still unsheathed. Hawktail copied.
'It amuses me, how much I scare you Clovers,' said the tom with a slight chuckle.
Hawktail narrowed his eyes. 'Well? Who are you?'
The brown cat chuckled again. 'The amusement. You ought to have seen your face.'
Hawktail snarled and leapt towards the cat, who pushed him away with a simple swipe of a paw. He smirked at Hawktail's fall but then his face dropped when he came closer to him. 'You- '
Hawktail got up and gave his chest fur a quick lick. 'Get on with it, will you.'

'You're Hawk.'
'Hawktail, yes.'
'And you're okay? You're alive, and happy?'
Hawktail spat near the tom's paws. 'I guess. Our leader is depressed, my closest friend got stolen from me, and my clan is in chaos. Apart from that, I'm great.'
The tom stepped closer. 'I am Featherstar, leader of FeatherClan.'
Featherstar nodded. 'Of course. We have all known grief. But we rely on our fallen loved ones to guide us. Like your mother.'
And that's when Hawktail realised that the familiar scar was the mark of FeatherClan.
And that FeatherClan was his birth clan.
And that this cat, this stranger, this leader, was his father.

Author's Note: ***So first I really need to thank you guys for 200 reads, it really means the world to me. I put so much work and effort into all of this and I really think I get the reward I deserve- if not more :) Second I need to apologise for the fact that I haven't updated this for a really long time! Obviously this has all been generated from roleplays over on DrawCast and lately some big things have been happening and I've been writing them down for the future :3 I've actually finished planning the 3rd book. Talk about being organised! ;D***
-Star <3

Chapter 5

[image]

Cinnamonpaw stepped carefully through the thick undergrowth. Dead leaves were scattered everywhere from the end of leaf-fall, and the early leaf-bare cold had dried them out. If the young cat stepped on a leaf, any nearby prey would be alerted.
The brown tom picked his way through the bracken and leaves, following the scent of a mouse. He planned his pawsteps carefully and eventually found the mouse's hiding place- a small hole near the base of an ancient oak tree. Cinnamonpaw crouched on a nearby root, and waited near the hole, watching out for the prey to emerge.
Pawsteps edged nearer, and the scent of Wolfpaw wafted around Cinnamonpaw. He prayed to StarClan that the apprentice wouldn't alert the prey he was waiting for.
Wolfpaw stepped into the small clearing, and Cinnamonpaw stared at him with wide eyes, as if he was trying to tell him to remain quiet. But Wolfpaw just padded nearer to the hole, thrusting his muzzle down it and then drawing it back out.
'What are you doing?' he asked Cinnamonpaw.
The brown tom rolled his eyes. 'You've probably scared it now!'
Wolfpaw chuckled slightly. 'What, the mouse? I just caught it. The hole is a tunnel, and I was waiting at the other end.'
Cinnamonpaw cuffed him round the ear playfully. 'Mouse-brain. At least we have some prey to bring back to the camp.'
The two made their way back to the clearing where the CloverClan camp was situated, and Wolfpaw placed his mouse on the fresh kill pile.
'Hey, want to do some battle training with me and Silvertail this evening?' he asked. Cinnmonpaw shrugged. 'Hawktail's never around anymore. And when he is, he always seems... so distant. Anyway, I won't be an apprentice for much longer.'
Wolfpaw gave his friend a lick. 'I'm sure Hawktail still cares about your training. He might just be... busy?'
'I don't think so. He's always out. I overheard Garlicflower talking to

Silvertail about how she saw him by the border of the forbidden land.'
'Maybe he was hunting?'
Cinnamonpaw sighed. 'Look, one thing's for sure. Something about my mentor has changed. And he doesn't care about me anymore.'
Wolfpaw opened his mouth to say something but Cinnamonpaw was already padding towards the apprentices' den.

***

Hawktail watched as cats emerged from their dens, the same pink scar running down their nose. Mothers with their kits, scarred, muscular warriors with apprentices at their feet, and finally the elders who were basking in the sun on large black boulders.
Featherstar had been meeting up with Hawktail for half a moon now, and he had eventually decided to take him to the FeatherClan camp. He smiled at his son with a face full of pride.
A small tabby she-cat approached him. 'Greetings. My name is Specklefur, and I am the deputy of FeatherClan. I remember when you were born.' She smiled at the silver tabby.
A young grey tom approached Hawktail with wide eyes. 'Hello!' he said to the stranger. 'I'm Oakleaf, I was made a warrior yesterday.' He smiled with eyes full of confidence and pride, before yawning. 'Sorry,' he apologised. 'I'm tired from my vigil.'
An older warrior padded up to Oakleaf and gave him a flick around the ear with his tail. 'Go and have a nap in the warriors' den,' he said affectionately.
Hawktail smiled at Featherstar. 'So this is FeatherClan, then.'
Featherstar nodded. 'Not sinister or violent. Just like your camp.'
Hawktail's eyes were wide with awe, amazed at how these cats, rumoured to be aggressive and cold, were getting on and lived in peace and harmony.
Featherstar mounted the large rock which stood in the center of the clearing.
'Cats of FeatherClan!' he mewed to his clan, his loud and powerful voice echoing through the camp. Featherstar flicked his tail, beckoning Hawktail to leap up onto the rock.
Once the silver warrior had reached the top of the rock, Featherstar continued.
'My son has returned!'

The clan burst into cheering and kits leapt about, mewing and squealing.
'He will be allowed to come to the FeatherClan camp whenever he wishes to. If you find him on the border, lead him to the camp. You are not to attack or confront him.'
The senior warriors nodded towards their leader.
After a few moments Featherstar jumped down from the rock and Hawktail followed him. The leader led his son to a large clearing, which was quiet and still. He sat in the middle of it, his eyes full of grief. Hawktail sat beside him, placing his tail on his father's shoulder comfortingly. 'What is this place?'
'Many moons ago, I sat here in the snow. Waiting for the news of your birth. Specklefur found me and told me that you and your brother had been born, and that your mother had died kitting.'
Hawktail's eyes widened. 'Brother?"
'Puddlekit. After you two were born, I knew that you couldn't stay here. You needed to be somewhere safer. The clan leader before me, Thistlestar, had just died. His bloody reign had left FeatherClan in chaos and on edge. I needed time to make the clan as good as it was before that mange-pelt took charge. I couldn't bear to take so much time away from my sons, when I didn't have a single excuse not to be with them at all times. The queens could barely feed you two as well, there was only a few. Too many kits, not enough milk.'
Hawktail lay down, tucking his paws under his chest. 'Doesn't sound too good. What did you do?'
Featherstar sighed. 'I did what I had to. I took you and Puddlekit away into the forest. I jumped into a bramble thicket on purpose, and when I got out I looked crippled and injured. I put on a limp and carried you to near the CloverClan camp. The current leader of CloverClan, Ryestar, found you and took you in. I pretended that I was a loner whose mate had died. I said I needed someone to care for my kits. When Ryestar wasn't looking, I disappeared. She took you back to camp. How is your brother?'
Hawktail looked confused. 'My brother? I never knew him?'
Featherstar looked at the ground. 'He must have died when you were put in the CloverClan nursery.'
'Surely someone would have spoken of him since?' Hawktail questioned.
The leader shrugged. 'I don't know.'
Hawktail looked at the sky. The sun was beginning to drop lower

and he knew that someone would have noticed his disappearance by now.
'I have to go,' he told his father. Featherstar dipped his head in acknowledgement, and Hawktail touched his nose before leaving the clearing and making his way back towards the border.
He walked through the forest, and listened out for any patrols coming towards him. If he ran into anyone from CloverClan this close to the border, there would most certainly be lots of questions.
There was a rustle of a bush nearby, and Hawktail prayed to StarClan that it wasn't a CloverClan cat.
And it wasn't.
It was something much, much worse.

Author's Note: ***Quick note- I make sure all my chapters are over 1000 words. This was just above, so I presume it was relatively small. But I needed to chop it off there at the cliffhanger :P thanks for over 200 reads!!***

-Star <3

Chapter 6

[image]

Ambereye sat beside Needlestar under the shade of a tree. The overhanging branches provided protection from the gentle but cold wind which blew through the camp.
The leader sat with a mouse at his paws, staring blankly at it. Ambereye tilted her head and rested her tail on his shoulder.
'Hey, what's the matter?' she said soothingly. He sighed.
'Lots of things.'
'I really am sorry about what happened to Poppysong. But Foxfoot has been punished.'
'Yes, I know. But it made me doubt some of the loyalty of this clan. Surely we should be able to trust our own clanmates?'
Ambereye nodded. 'You can trust everyone. I know it's hard to think that a CloverClan warrior could do something like that, but Foxfoot is not a warrior. StarClan will not be eager to welcome him at his passing.'
Needlestar sighed again. 'Oh Ambereye, I don't know what I'd do without you.'
The she-cat smiled at him with a gleam in her eye. Hawktail's face popped into her mind as she gazed at the leader she had come to care about so much. No, she thought, pushing the image of Hawktail away. She looked at Needlestar more and nodded to herself. Yes.

***

Hawktail could only stare in horror as the massive twoleg stepped from out of the bush. It was coming towards him quickly, arms outstretched and yapping with joy. He let out a hiss and sped away into the forest, the twoleg following closely. Its large feet stomped through the woodland, flattening ferns and grasses and making birds scatter.
The twoleg chased Hawktail until he was close to the camp. He veered round, not wanting to lead it right where his clanmates

were. The chase came to a clearing, where Batpelt, Pebblewing and Flowerpaw were sitting, discussing scent marks. The cats' eyes widened as Hawktail and the twoleg came thundering into the clearing, churning up mud and grass. Pebblewing hissed at the twoleg, but then saw Hawktail and bounded over. She threw herself at
it, digging in her claws and growling. The twoleg shrieked, and shook the she-cat off who landed on the ground with a loud thud. Flowerpaw gasped and pelted towards the twoleg, Batpelt by her side. The twoleg scooped Hawktail up, squeezing him in its big arms. He bit down on its paw sharply, making sure he drew small beads of blood to the surface.
He jumped down just as Batpelt and Flowerpaw leapt up at the twoleg's face, clawing and biting. It let out a final shriek before it stomped off into the forest once again.
Hawktail ran over to Pebblewing, who was lying on the floor with her eyes closed. He gasped and licked the side of her cheek quickly, his licks slowly drawing consciousness back to his clanmate. She coughed slightly, and Flowerpaw and Batpelt padded over.
'I'll get Hollydawn,' said Flowerpaw quietly. The small she-cat quickly padded out of the clearing and headed in the direction of the CloverClan camp.
'It's okay,' Hawktail whispered to Pebblewing as she gained strength. 'Hollydawn is on her way. You are just a little stunned.' She smiled up at him. 'Has the twoleg gone?' she asked.
Batpelt nodded. 'Yes. Without you, it could have attacked the camp. Or even worse, it could have alerted more twolegs.'
'Well done,' Hawktail told the young warrior. 'That was really something. You distracted it so that we could close in and finish off the fight. You're a hero.'

***

Ambereye gasped as she saw Hollydawn enter the camp with four cats behind her. Hawktail was among them, Pebblewing leaning on his shoulder. Ambereye felt a small jab in her stomach. *Was Hawktail close to Pebblewing?* She shook it off. *Why shouldn't he be. He can do what he wants*, she thought with a pang of guilt.
Needlestar had seen the group of cats too, and stood up immediately.

'What happened?' he questioned the medicine cat, concern in his mew.
Batpelt stepped forward. 'Hawktail came running into the clearing where Pebblewing, Flowerpaw and me were resting. We attacked it and drove it away, but Pebblewing got injured.'
Needlestar glanced quickly at Hawktail, his eyes narrowed. 'There aren't normally any twolegs around here. Was it a big one?'
Hawktail nodded, looking at the floor. 'I was hunting near the border. It just... stepped out of a bush and started chasing me. I don't know why.'
Needlestar looked at his paws thoughtfully. 'I'll make sure there are extra patrols. We can't have twolegs invading the camp when there are kits about to be born. Greyfeather's kits are young and it won't be long before Dewfoot will be kitting. We don't want anything to happen.'
Nettleleaf, a large white tom, ran over and approached Pebblewing, who was his littermate. 'Are you okay?' he gasped, concern in his voice. 'What happened?'
Pebblewing gave him a reassuring lick. 'I'm fine, honestly. I won't even need to stay in the medicine cat's den, right Hollydawn?' The medicine cat nodded.
'But take it easy.'
Pebblewing smiled at her and limped off, Nettleleaf at her side.
Hawktail turned to Needlestar. 'There's actually something I need to talk to you about, Needlestar,' he mewed quietly.
'Feel free,' mewed Needlestar.
Hawktail hesitated. 'N-not here.'
Needlestar nodded. 'I understand. Come to my den.' He looked at Ambereye. 'I'll see you at sunset.' She nodded.
When the two toms had reached the leader's den, Needlestar pushed through the draping ivy and held them up so Hawktail could get in. They sat down, and Hawktail gazed around the large space. 'Nice den,' he said politely. The leader smiled and sat opposite.
'So,' he began. 'What did you want to talk to me about?'
'Two things, actually.'
Needlestar beckoned him on with a flick of his tail.
'Flowerpaw was very brave today. Pebblewing would agree. I-I was thinking about her skills as a warrior...'
Needlestar sighed. 'Oh Hawktail, I do agree with you. But Flowerpaw can't be a warrior. She's too young, and, although she

has got the skills of a warrior mastered, she still has a lot to learn in terms of living the life of a warrior. I'm sorry, if I could I would make her a warrior. Besides, StarClan hasn't sent me a sign. I remember your sign, it was a hawk, flying over a hill. Its shadow moved over the ground swiftly, and its feathers rustled in the wind. Hawkshadow was the first name that I was going to call you, but then one of its tail feathers drifted down and so I named you Hawktail.'
Hawktail's eyes darted left as he secretly wished that Needlestar had called him Hawkshadow. He pushed the thought away.
'And the second thing?' purred Needlestar.
'Ah yes. This one's a little more... personal?' Needlestar's gaze remained firm.
'You may know that both of us have taken an interest to Ambereye...' he said quietly. Needlestar looked down and gave a small nod.
'I do know that, yes.'
'Well the thing is, I just wanted to say that... at the end of the day, it's Ambereye's decision, right?' he mewed.
The leader nodded. 'Right.'

Chapter 7

[image]

Heatherpaw gazed at Cinnamonpaw from afar, taking in his features and every contour of his strong body. His dark brown fur, patched and with a pale underbelly. And his striking eyes... she wished she could sit around all day with Cinnamonpaw chatting and looking at him. But secretly she had a feeling that he was too good for her, even though they were both skilled and the same age. She had also noticed that she was not the only one who had taken a liking to the brown tom, and Heatherpaw knew for a fact that Flowerpaw and Snowpaw were beginning to loiter around him more and more, glancing at him just as Heatherpaw did.
She smelt a scent just behind her, and recognised it to be Lilacpaw. She and Heatherpaw were littermates, but they weren't kin. Lilacpaw's mother, Snowsong had looked after her when she was a kit- alone and motherless. In fact, Heatherpaw had never known her parents and many cats had told her she had simply been found near the camp, almost dead. She wanted to be the best warrior she could be so that she could give back what her clanmates did for her by protecting them with her life and hunting for them.
Lilacpaw padded up to the Bengal she-cat. 'Hey, can I speak to you?' she asked quietly.
Heatherpaw gave her a friendly and comforting lick. 'Of course. Shall we go for a walk and speak?' Lilacpaw gave a small nod.
The two headed out into the forest, and Heatherpaw drunk in the amazing scents coming from all around her. The trees rustled and although leaf-bare was on its way, many leafs still clung to the branches of towering oaks, their crimson hues casting gleaming beams of red and orange onto the forest ground which was also covered in a blanket of red and yellow leaves. Lilacpaw nudged Heatherpaw onto the floor, where she landed in a pile of leaves. 'Hey!' she exclaimed, spitting out fragments of twigs, leaves and dirt.
Lilacpaw laughed but then Heatherpaw stood and charged at her, the two rolling down a hill with leaves churning up as they fell. Heatherpaw laughed but Lilacpaw's face was blank, she was smiling

but Heatherpaw could tell it was forced. 'Sorry,' she said quietly. 'I suppose the thing you wanted to talk to me about is serious, right?'
Lilacpaw gulped and nodded. 'It- 'she paused to gather herself. 'It's about Foxfoot.'
Heatherpaw turned on her and growled. 'That filthy, flea-ridden mange- '
Lilacpaw sighed. 'No. It's about when he was my mentor.'
Heatherpaw perched on a nearby log, looking at the stream which ran through the bank nearby. Leaves floated around in it and Heatherpaw watched as a frog emerged from the surface. It croaked before leaping onto the bank and jumping into a large, deep puddle. She smiled at it and then turned back to her friend as she began to talk.
'Foxfoot was a good mentor,' she began. Lilacpaw then stopped before adding, 'at first.'
Heatherpaw gulped. She was afraid that what her littermate was about to tell her wouldn't be the nicest of things, considering that Foxfoot was a mange-pelt murdering fox-heart.
'He was very nice to start with, taking me out hunting and training and always giving me rewards for being good or doing something well. But then something changed, and I never knew what. One day he started shouting at me for no reason, just because I missed some stupid scrawny mouse. I thought that was bad, but it got a whole lot worse. We were training, and he showed me a really hard move. No cat could ever be expected to do it first time, even the best warriors like Pebblewing or Batpelt. So I did the move and I failed, which wasn't surprising. But Foxfoot was horrified. He aimed a blow at my head, and then shouted at me. And this continued. I got wounded during battle every session, and one day I tried to hide so that I didn't have to do the session. But I got found out by him, and boy did he go mad. He struck me four times, and then forced me to go and see Hollydawn and tell her that a fierce kittypet did it. I was glad when he got exiled.'
When Lilacpaw had finished her story, Heatherpaw stared at her with wide eyes.
Lilacpaw gulped, and looked at her paws blankly. 'Oh Heatherpaw, I wish I'd have told someone sooner. Then maybe Foxfoot would have been thrown out of the clan earlier and Poppysong never would have died!'
'No, Lilacpaw! None of that was your fault, it was all that FOX-

HEART'S!' she yelled at the sky, growling as her friend pressed her head into Heatherpaw's shoulder.
'I wish Foxfoot was dead! I wish he was never alive to do all of this! StarClan please hear me!' she screamed at the sky, hope pulsing through her heart.
'Do not let this mange-pelt, mouse-brain, fox-hearted filthy rogue into your afterlife! He never deserved to live!'
As Heatherpaw's plea came to an end, the forest around her fell silent.
She and Lilacpaw padded out of the clearing, their pelts brushing. They walked off as the sun set above their heads, silhouetting their figures. As they left the clearing, however, the two she-cats failed to notice the piercing green eyes which had been fixated on them the whole time.
'What have I done...' whispered the massive orange tom hiding in the bush.

'What have I done.'

Hi! So sorry about forgetting to do an Author's Note last time... Whoops XD but I hope you liked this chapter! I'm sorry that it's short, and it's also under 1000 words which is against my code o.O but I really really really really wanted to leave it there on that nice little cliffhanger. By the way I wrote this in under 15 minutes :3 (I'm kind of proud lol) but please tell me if you spot any mistakes as I haven't done a proof of this yet XD Yay I'm almost at 400 reads... That means I'm almost at 500! And that means... I'm ALMOST AT 1000! I'll be at a million soon... (Jk)

-Star

Chapter 8

[image]

Silverkit shrieked as her brother, Redkit, leapt onto her small white tail. The two kits laughed and rolled around the dusty camp floor. Shadowstorm was sitting nearby, watching with Swiftclaw. The two were very close and Swiftclaw was awaiting confirmation of her kitting from Hollydawn.
The medicine cat was also sitting near the two kits, but she was talking quietly to Maplekit. The mature tom had taken an extreme interest in Hollydawn's work, and was fascinated by her knowledge of herbs and connection to the clan's starry ancestors.
'And cobwebs for bloody wounds, right?' mewed Maplekit.
Hollydawn nodded affectionately, purring and looking at the tom with wide eyes.
'That's all for today, young one,' she said softly. 'Go and play with your littermates. You'll be apprentices soon and you'll be too busy!'
Maplekit frowned. 'Medicine cats don't have time to play. They have to sleep and go get prophecies and collect herbs and— '
Hollydawn gave him a cuff over the ear. 'You're a kit, Maplekit. Go enjoy it while you can.'
He frowned again. 'But- '
Hollydawn looked at him, urging him to go and play. He sighed in surrender and turned to play with his brother and sister who were know climbing up the side of Wolfpaw. His other brother, Jaykit, was asleep beside his mother, his breathing slow and relaxed.
'Hey!' yelped the small dark grey tom, flicking his paw at Silverkit and knocking her to the ground. She squeaked and Redkit jumped to her side.
'You killed her!' he yelped, looking at his sister who was pretending to be dead.
'Yeah, I know,' said Wolfpaw coolly, playing along. 'Because I'm Featherstar, and I can do whatever I please because I'm from FeatherClan,' he mocked. The two kits giggled, including Silverkit who was supposed to be lying still and looking as dead as she possibly could.
Wolfpaw growled and Redkit challenged it, leaping at his stomach.

He let him ram into it, before falling to the ground. 'That was my last life!' he cried. 'Because I wasted all the others on stupid things like going up to badgers and asking them to fight me...' he said, trying to put on a deep growling voice to imitate Featherstar.
This sent the kits into a laughing fit, and even Shadowstorm and Swiftclaw grinned at the remark.
'Let's go out into the forest!' cried Wolfpaw. 'We can climb trees!' A drop of rain ran down the tom's nose. 'Yay, rain! It will be even more fun if the tree trunks are slippery.' The kits squeaked in excitement and rushed out of camp, Wolfpaw at the head of the group. Rain was falling faster now, splashing on the ground and forming puddles.
Swiftclaw rose to her feet as the group faded away into the distance. 'No! They can't go out on their own!' Shadowstorm got to his feet. 'Their scents! They will be washed away! Get Flowerpaw and Pebblewing so we can go track them!'
The two she-cats were nearby, and Swiftclaw raced over to them and exchanged some quick words. They gasped and Swiftclaw ran out of camp with them on her tail, Shadowstorm following closely behind.
The small patrol came to a clearing, paw marks were printed into the mud but they were becoming fainter as the rain seeped into the oozing brown liquid and churned it up. 'Wolfpaw, Redkit, Silverkit!' Shadowstorm called loudly.
The other cats copied, their pleas echoing through the rain smothered forest. There was a slight muffled reply, but then Flowerpaw gasped loudly.
'What is it?' mewed Pebblewing, concern edging her voice.
'I heard a shriek!' she said shakily. 'Coming from over there!' she signaled east with her tail.
'Let's go!' shouted Shadowstorm, his voice barely audible over the pouring rain. The cats Shadowstorm thundered out of the clearing, mud flying up and making the cats' fur thick and brown. Flowerpaw was at the front of the patrol; her ears were angled towards the sound coming from within the forest. Thunder echoed through the vast skies, sending bursts of surprise and terror through the group.
Eventually, the cats came to a large clearing where Wolfpaw was sitting, bent over a limp body. He was thrusting his grey head into the air, mewing in pain and regret.
Pebblewing gasped and looked away with disbelief, and

Shadowstorm padded forward, every inch of his body shaking with fatigue. "W-Wolfpaw...' he managed, the words barely making sense. The apprentice looked up at the deputy with eyes full of horror, and he hissed and his short grey fur began to bristle. 'Hey, it's okay, calm down,' mewed Shadowstorm, grunting with the effort of speaking. The tom's eyes came to rest on the limp body which Wolfpaw was near when they found him, and with horror he realised it was Redkit's. At that moment Swiftclaw sprinted over, and let out a cry of pain as she saw the young kit, his eyes dull and his heart unmoving. Wolfpaw unsheathed his claws and buried them into the ground, flexing his paws and breathing heavily. 'My... fault... my... fault...' was the only thing that came from the young cat's mouth. Swiftclaw went to walk to towards him, and the cats watched with anticipation. The loving she-cat had a way with words. Especially in times like this. Wolfpaw saw the she-cat edging closer, and hissed again. 'Don't,' he spat. 'My fault.'
'Stop,' mewed Swiftclaw. 'You are young. This is nobody's fault. Now, where is Silverkit?'
Wolfpaw stood, frozen. The tom suddenly let out a cry and then pelted out into the forest, his eyes tightly shut and his tail slamming against the thick mudded ground. Thunder. This time a lot louder, and closer.
'Stop!' screamed Swiftclaw, but the apprentice was long gone.

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Hawktail watched in horror as he saw the patrol of cats returning to camp, none of the missing cats with them. He ran over, following the crowd of concerned cats which had started to form. 'Where are they?' 'What happened?' he heard as he edged towards the patrol. Needlestar came forward, Ambereye at his side. Hawktail felt a prod in the stomach, which was what he felt every time he saw his love and the leader together, their pelts brushing. Cats to the front of the circle gasped and let out cries of grief.
Hawktail pushed forward, wanting to see what had caused the sudden outbreak of sadness. There, on the wet ground, lay the limp, dead body of Redkit. Shadowstorm was quietly talking to Needlestar, and when he walked away Needlestar came into the middle of the camp. 'Gather,' he called to his clanmates.
When the whole of the clan was gathered around the leader,

Needlestar began to speak. He told the cats of how Wolfpaw had ran into the forest with the two kits and how Redkit had died. He also said how Silverkit was never found and that Wolfpaw had ran away, knowing that the death was his fault. Greyfeather, the kits' mother, was crouched beside Maplekit. Her head was bowed in grief, and every so often she let out cries of pain. Her other kit, Jaykit, had his face buried into his mother's fur. The kit's body was shaking. Maplekit was silent. He looked towards the sky, where the sun was beginning to set. Silvertail, Wolfpaw's mentor, was sitting beside the young tom's parents, Sweetbriar and Greyheart. Hawktail was torn apart, seeing his clan in grief. And it was from that moment that Hawktail realised that he couldn't leave them again, and that this is where he belonged. That these cats were his clanmates, and that was all that mattered. Not Featherstar. Not FeatherClan.
Just his clanmates and the ones he loved.

Author's Note: ***So I'm so, so, so sorry I didn't update this for like over a month. I had tons of exams and no motivation plus I'm on holiday at the moment but I managed to bring my laptop and get this long-awaited chapter typed up. Tell me what you think will happen next and also give me a shout if you spot any mistakes as I haven't spent a lot of time proof reading this.***

-Star <3

Chapter 9

The sweet scents of prey drifted into Hawktail's nose, as him and the patrol of cats padded quietly through the forest. Batpelt, who was among the patrol, split apart from it; Hawktail assumed he was following a prey scent. Sweetbriar followed him, her tail dragging along the ground. She was still wracked with grief from the disappearance of her son, Wolfpaw. It had been a moon since the incident, and the clan had been badly affected. Hawktail gave her a quick smile, hoping to try and raise her spirits. She smiled back, but Hawktail could see it was forced.

He was left alone, and he knew exactly what he needed to do. His plan was to go to FeatherClan and tell his father the truth about who he really was- a CloverClan warrior. Hawktail had no idea how the leader would react. If he truly loved his son, surely he would accept that he was most loyal to the clan he had grown up in? And if he wasn't happy or didn't take it well, what would he do then?

Hawktail was shaking slightly as he walked through the damp forest. The atmosphere seemed drowsy and the constant rainfall had made the whole clan miserable and gloomy. With the sense of bereavement still hanging in the air, it was the last thing they needed.

Suddenly a dark figure approached him. The scent was familiar, too familiar. The last thing Hawktail remembered was the blazing eyes of his father burning into his fur as his temple thudded against the wet ground.

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Hawktail woke in an unfamiliar place. He knew the scent; it was a medicine cat den. There was a slight tang of thyme, and the subtle, pleasant scent of catmint.

Featherstar was pacing around the den, huffing and sighing angrily. The moment he saw that the silver tabby had awoken he

leapt over.

'Where have you been? Do you not think I was worried about you, or had simply forgotten about my own son? How could you leave me like this, with no warning or goodbye?'

Hawktail didn't know what to say. He had been prepared before, but not fully. He was going to have thought about what he was going to say on his way to the FeatherClan border, but Featherstar had crossed it already and come to track him down.

'Why did you trespass?' Hawktail muttered. The second the words came out of his mouth, he regretted it.

'Trespassing? I haven't seen for StarClan knows how long! What would you do if I visited you every day and then one day I just stopped and didn't say a word?'

'Things have happened in CloverClan,' Hawktail said whilst he got to his paws. He was almost as tall as his father, he noticed, and he was almost as muscular. He felt proud to be the leader's son for a split second, but then the feeling sparked away as he began to talk again and find his voice. 'I had to stay loyal to my clanmates. I cannot live with one paw in this clan and one paw in the other. It is too hard for me.'

'Then choose.'

Hawktail growled and clenched his sharp teeth. 'It is not that easy! And you don't know how it feels. Your parents' parents' parents were FeatherClan and you never got passed on to a completely different clan when you were less than a moon old! Maybe you got a say in how your life went, but I didn't and now I do. And it's the same decision. And, Featherstar, I have made my mind up. I may not have been born in CloverClan, and you and my mother may have been FeatherClan, but I was raised in CloverClan. That is where I belong. I have made the choice.'

Featherstar gave him a long, angry look. 'After all I have done for you, and you prefer those mange-pelts?'

'I don't know how you expect me to live the way you want me to. You said I have to pick, and I have. What more are you asking for? All the power StarClan has?'

'I am your father, Hawktail. And your leader. You are a warrior of FeatherClan!'

'I am a CloverClan warrior! That is what I have been since you ditched me there all those seasons ago!'

That's when Featherstar lashed out at his son, his long, freshly sharpened claws dragging down his face. They broke through Hawktail's skin just above his nose, where the sacred mark was made on FeatherClan cats when they were two moons old. Every FeatherClan cat had the scar, and wore it proudly. And as Hawktail fell to the ground from the impact of the scratch, he knew that he would not wear his scar proudly.

As now, it meant that there was no escaping FeatherClan and his father.

He got up, growling and snarling, blood pouring down his face. 'How could you?' he spat, shaking the blood off his face.

'It was for your own good. You are a FeatherClan warrior, this was your birthplace.'

'And most of the time I wish it wasn't! I wish you weren't my father and I had never been born in this horrible, mud-ridden clan full of greedy mange-pelts!'

The leader looked at the ground, and Hawktail bolted out of the clan, mud churning up as his paws impacted the wet floor. He stopped at a stream, thrusting his head into the murky water to try and wash the blood away from his face.

It oozed down his face, staining his light fur as he frantically tried to fight back tears. Would his clan accept him like this? The mark was well known, and maybe they would think that he had betrayed them all. Hawktail lay on a patch of moss, and the water squelched out the sides and trickled onto his paws.

He began to scratch at his face, as if he was hoping the scar would peel off. He made the blood come heavier, and then stopped just as he realised that this would make the scratch scar. He chewed up a nearby leaf and plastered the green paste onto his face, making it go down past his mouth and nose so that the shape was irregular and not the same shape as the FeatherClan mark.

How was he going to live now, knowing that his father would be watching his every move and testing his loyalty? And what about Ambereye, she wouldn't listen to him- not when she was now close to being mates with Needlestar. He sighed, a long and loud sigh.

He needed to talk to someone.

Author's Note: ***I'm so sorry for not updating recently. I've been putting writing this book off and I haven't been thinking straight. This chapter really sucks, so I'm sorry. If I ever re-write the book or certain chapters, this one will be at the top of the list. Also we have recently reached some milestones! We now have over 600 READS! And the book has hit 11,000 words, a personal record for me. When I was younger I wrote a lot of books and the longest one had 52 pages and 6000 (as you can tell the font was very big) this is also the first time I have used Wattpad on my MacBook instead of my iPad and I will continue to do this as it is a lot easier this way. Sorry for the long note, peace out!***

-Star <3

Author's Note

Hello all.
It's been around four years since I begun this book at the age of twelve. Looking back, my writing was incredibly captivating despite my often self-deprecating notes to conclude chapters!
I invested so much time and effort into planning and writing this story, as well as designing some of its many characters and participating in DrawCast activities involving the CloverClan group. Truth be told, I don't think DrawCast exists anymore! However, I'd still like to thank the friends I made and especially the founder of the group (who, unfortunately, I am not in contact with) and particularly TheMelodicCat. Working on this story improved my writing skills significantly and I still write to this day.
I don't read or write about Warrior Cats anymore- which is, of course, somewhat inevitable given that I am much older now.
This story will always have a special place in my heart, as well as every piece of art made for this series, every character, and every DrawCast user that got involved. Sincerely, thank you.
Unsurprisingly, this story won't get the ending it deserves. However, I do hope that every one of you enjoyed reading what I had to offer.